

HOMER L. DAFRAE



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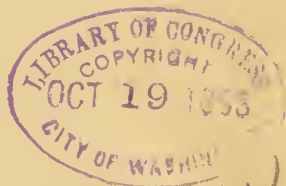
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

HOMER L. DAFRAE

BY

SUMNER EWING.



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PART I.

*“Man's love is of himself a thing apart;
'Tis woman's whole existence.”*

I.

Oh, smiling land, within such lovely clime!
Here bounteous Nature strews her gifts sublime,
To deck the hill, the grove, the field, the fertile plain,
With rarest tints for tree, and flower, and rip'ning grain;
Here richest cereals upfill barn and storehouse high,
To glad the heart of man,—his chiefest wants supply.
So Eden-like doth seem this favored place,
As freighted breezes bear to senses' taste,
The songs of birds and 'fumes of blossoms sweet,
Bespeaking thus some blest and bright retreat.
Sure where the Giver all wants doth supply,
'Tis best for man to dwell, to grow, to die;
Who will not say, “Most favored race,
To dwell within such favored place!”

II.

While Nature smiles full on this land,
Is there no evil to withstand?

Hath sin allowed this place to be
From Satan's snares and foils full free ?
While Paradise, man's blest estate,
Was lost because he gained the gate,
And subtle truths on woman's ear
(The same her consort next did hear,
From her who was his flesh and bone,
Without whom he was one alone,)
Were breathed in 'guiling words most fair,
Which heeded, both their hearts he did ensnare;
So fell they both, that holy, heav'nly pair.

III.

The climes within the Orient,
Bedecked from beauty's store full spent,
Are blown upon by heated winds
That scorch earth's verdure—flower and vines,
And one short hour annihilate
The growth of many fruitful days;
And beauties of which man did prate
All vanish as 'fore furnace rays.
Like sons of men who, when the hours

Of deadly battle are o'er past,
Doth strew the ground like sickled flowers
The place they fell, their bed, the last.
Their graves are not within the earth,
But like the flowers' they're on her breast,
Though "six feet" each one heired by birth;
But friend nor foe press not such claim,
And there their wasting forms remain,
To moulder like the flowers, unblest.
But dreadful as this dread Simoon,
It wrecks not death to mortal life,
To chase from man this transient boon,
And end alternate joys and strife.

IV.

But o'er our land—this fruitful land,
The *Simoon of Intemperance*
Blows blasting waves to child and man,
And he in heated suff'ring pants,
While inly longs the time be brief
Until his frame shall find relief;
Then pleads he for the plants decay,

But still's held dying day by day.
Unlike the death from scorpion's sting,
That to the suff'rer soon doth bring
Relief from poison's fire;
But slowly gnawing night and day,
Ere strongest vitals will give way,
By which the victim may expire.
And when this wave strikes hopeful youth
It blights his days to come,
And thus we say, "More sad in sooth,
Than him whose race is nearly run."

V.

And in this place dwelt one, Dafraë,
And env'ous lineage had he;
Why he was highted Homer L.
The motive no one thinks to tell,
Save meddling dames who vouched that he
By such would claim security.
Not now we'll note his name and race,
Nor classic features of his face;

Nor mention make of form unique
The graceful curves of which bespeak
Much careful training not unblent
With innate taste most freely lent.

VI.

His earliest years went happ'ly by,
For childish wants met quick supply;
And she whose trust to train the mind,
Its inborn fitness soon did find;
And youthful tasks were such employ,
As artist minds do full enjoy.
And thus the soul did grow and gleam,
Like favored tree by favoring stream;
And though the clouds withhold their rain
Will not its verdure still remain,
So long as stream flows to sustain?
But if this flowing *sup*-port fail,
And adverse elements prevail,
This favored tree will share the fate
Of others far less fortunate.

VII.

For manly sports and chastest glee,
His mind and limbs were equal free;
But joined he not the hoiden game,
For such his nature held disdain.
Delighted he to mount his steed,
And foremost in the chase to lead,
And urge with row'l and tally-ho,
Both horse and hound on fleeing roe;
O'er wooded hill and open plain
He rode nor thought to draw the rein;
And as delight intensified,
He all the others did outride;
And hunter unto hunter said,
While envying the rate he sped,
“Which think ye, sir's, young Homer's aim,
To prove his steed or catch the game?”
And pleased he his boat to glide,
From lakelet's brim to farther side;
With steady hand in waters blue,
He plied the oar with stroke most true.

VIII.

When Egypt's queen went forth to meet
Rome's warrior 'gainst her kingdom sent,
Her beauty was her battlement;
She 'tempted not him to defeat,
With horse and chariot, bow and spear,
War's weapons of her time we lear.
But entered she her royal barge,
Down at the sacred river's marge;
Attended there by her dark favored slaves
Who dipped with silver oars the sweet Nile's waves,
Which moved with ease their monarch's yacht along
And truest measure beat to rower's song,
Regaled thus, she sailed to try
The *iris* of the Roman eye.
Not sound of trump or wild pibroch
That signaled first the queen's approach;
But on his face the South wind played
So gently, though so richly lade,
That brought perfumes of spices sweet,
And music's sounds his ear to greet;

And when the sight burst on his eye
He neither thought to fight nor fly;
But spell-bound he, by beauty's power
Forgot the conduct of the hour.
His soldiers who, an hour before,
At his command would spill their gore,
He ruthless leaves for Cleo's side,
Though thousands the mad act deride.

IX.

Oft Homer rowed the placid lake,
Where came the kine their thirst to slake,
And birds flew singing from the brake;
Unto the hour he'd lend a song,
With plashing oar the time he'd mete
That ev'ry measure be replete,—
But all alone he rowed not long;
For list'ning maidens heard his mellow voice
And said, "List! sure 'tis the bird of our choice."
And feigned they then to seek the songster out,
And from their anxious minds remove all doubt,
And note his form and color too,

If be it black or brown or blue.
But when they well had gained the place,
From which came forth the notes so clear,
No singing bird saw they nor trace,
But boatman in his boat quite near.
And now they speak in feigning words
That a false concept might prevail:
“Oh! ’tis thy song so sweet we heard;
We thought it was the nightingale.”
The boatman heeds this strange salute
And doffs his cap—his voice not mute,
He echoes quick,—“The nightingale!
Ne’er doth he sing the while I sail;
Now know ye not his habits quite?
He singeth not before the night;
More plausible ’twould be to say
The lark or songster of the day.
Maids, be not grieved by such mistake,
But come and with me sail the lake.”
Each eager to the boat they hied
To gain the place by Homer’s side.
How merrily the glad hours passed!

They gave no thought of fading ray,
'Til night began to claim the day,
Dispersing gayest crew at last.

X.

Full many days the same would come,
Whene'er they heard the boatman's lay;
And sure there was reserved for one,
The place she gained on that first day.
He soon to her his mind made known
Whisp'ring, "Could we but row alone!"
And afterward he dared to try
Some odd but harmless strategy.
Think ye he came no more to row?
To such the answer must be "No."
But when he came dissembled he,
His song the fisher's song to be;
By such was Helen not deceived,
For soon she sat her wonted place;
Though yearned they not to row apace,
As they, from others be relieved.
Swift passed the hours but twilight brought

No warning that the day was done,
Nor heeded they the stars come out;—
Scarce had they missed the light of sun.
But by and by on rapid wing,
The nightingale flew singing o'er the lake;
His notes to Homer's mind did bring
The fact, that 'tis at night he sings;
So homeward they their course did make.

XI.

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'Twas autumn time. The skies were clear,
And summer leaves began to sear;
The huntsman said, "'Tis time to chase.
Then started he with gentle pace,
The hounds that long had been so mute,
But soon were baying in pursuit
Of fox or doe or horned hind,—
Ignoring game of lesser kind.
The hunters rode at hunter's speed,
Nor halted they for wood or mead—
But Homer L. was not their lead.

And some said, "Strange that L. Dafaë
Should not the foremost horseman be;
'Tis long since we have met to chase
That Homer L. won not the race."
On looking back they him descried,
And the fair Helen by his side.
And as they rode their fond hearts beat
With joy so restless, so replete;
Anon she saw the flush that came,
Like floods that follow keenest shame,
And play awhile upon his face,
Recede and leave not tint nor trace,
Save in his bright eye's crimsoned lid,
Which from her own could not be hid.

XII.

When Helen sate alone that night,
Her heart so heavy—late so light,
She fell to weeping; well she knew
The cause of such factitious hue;
Yes, well she knew the *Simoon's* breath
Was breathed by him she loved the best;

And in her mind, all frantic now,
She thought she saw his proud form bow,
Like lovely tree before the gale;
That, often as the winds assail,
Yields to the force against it sent;
But when the maddened element
Abates awhile and tree recoil
It seems the raving winds to foil;
But by and by the stoutest blast
That is the fiercest and the last,
Bears to the earth the shivered trunk,
With roots uptorn that deep were sunk
In firmest soil; "Alas! No hope," we cry,
"For as the tree doth fall, so must it lie."

XIII.

When Homer L. would seek her home,
He feigned she was not paler grown;
And oft would urge her walk the court,
Or 'long the pleasant stream to stroll,
And feigned his heavy words in sport,
Though sadness did his thoughts enroll;

And when she saw him importune,
Her strength renewed the more and soon.
One eve they walked their wonted place,—
Her dark eyes resting on his face,

She said:

“Think ye it strange that we should meet
And always thus congenial greet?
Think ye it sad if we must part,
Pierced by some cruel—cruel dart?

“When first I saw thy beauteous face,
The manly features well defined,
Had late the youthful lines displaced;
Though all indexed a thoughtful mind.

“‘Ah well,’ said I, ‘A friend he’ll be,
Like others I have chanced to meet,
Whom oft-times meeting does not lend
A fond desire again to greet.’

“But now my heart’s a Juliet;
Although my lips I ne’er may wet,
Like that fudicial Capulet,

With draught that brings such pangless pain,
With draught that breaks then mends life's chain.
Nor sleep I in the vaulted tomb,
In death's apparent cold embrace,
But equal fate my life I'd doom,
If need to claim thy constant grace.

“And can my small contracted breast
Contain enough of Passion's fire
Whose fuel is thy noble self,
Whose flames leap up to heav'n and higher?

“Methinks the space is but too small
To hold the rev'rence due to thee,
Whose soul, whose mind, whose all,
Is lofty near as angels be.

“And though since man who fell by sin,
Th' atonement needs him to redeem;
If some without this enter in,
Art thou not safe in such a theme?

“Or in thy breast lurks there a wrong
The scion of some habit strong,

That birthed the when the *Simoon* blew
His pois'nous wave—inhaled by you?

“ He’s blighted many a son and brother;
But when his breath blows o’er my lover,
My life desires begin to wane,
My highest hopes seem all in vain,
Naught brings to me surcease of pain.

“ But yesternight I dreamed a dream
That lengthened into years;
And when I waked from out such scene,
My eyes were bathed in tears.

“ I saw a manor high and strong
And beautiful as high;
And this my thought: ‘ ’Twill shelter long
The lords that occupy.’

“ With careful eyes I did admire
From roof to wall and floor;
And then again from highest spire
To arch and corridor.

“ And while immersed in deep delight,
I saw a flameless brand,
By adverse winds that blew that night,
Borne 'gainst that structure grand.

“ When smould'ring fires began to burn,
I thought to turn and fly;
But stayed to watch the waves in turn
Leap in and out and high.

“ But blazed it not in bright'ning wave
That wakes the wearied hind,
And bids him toward the scene to rave,
Though stifling be the wind.

“ The ornaments, the beauties lent
From out art's stock and store,
Were first to yield the element
That would consume the whole.

“ How long I gazed I dare not say;
The measure though must be by years,
For countless days wore months away
Yet came no respite to my fears.

“The support of this structure high,
The seething stones, the iron beams,
So long withstood, but by and by
Fell rumbling to the ground; it seems
I’d hoped release from failing means.

“That I had been there, aye and age,
I knew for oft the seasons changed;
Awhile the winter winds would rage
Then in their stead the zephyrs ranged.

“I saw, too, that my once-dark hair
Had changed to gray—yea almost white;
And on my cheek once smooth and fair,
My shriveled hand, the furrows there,
Did trace with touch too true though light.

“The huge black trees I saw but dim,
And as their branches waved or bent,
I heard no sound of rushing wind,
For hearing’s power was wholly spent.

“By what or why, I cannot tell,
I from this place was lifted high,

Then on the smoking ruins fell,
And there was left to wail and die.

“ Thus ended such unwelcome thought;
But that which caused such burning tears,
Was that I long with pain was fraught,
And perished not when dawned my fears.”

XIV.

By this the lighted court was gained;
And now his anxious heart was pained,
For much he thought the dream divined
A hapless fate, to his own mind.
And Helen's heart was saddened, too,
For of such fate too well she knew,
And pleaded that he would refrain
From that which fraught their minds with pain.
To such entreat he did bedight
And whispered heavily—“ Good night.”

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XV.

Paternal care nor leech's skill
Could thwart the stern Destroyer's will;

Nor pleasant ways so free from strife
Could lure her mind again to life;
And he whom she was swift to own,
As her true heart's established throne,
Could words of hope nor presence give
To bring anew desires to live.
And while anear her couch of pain,
He stood with fevered breath and brain
And gave support her drooping head,
She mustered failing strength and said:

XVI.

"Think not thy kindly ministering
Shall prolong my life one hour;
For I have passed over the summit,
From beyond which,
Neither thy tones of love nor deeds of the same

Can call me back;
'Tend thou then graciously and without fear.

“ The soft touch of thy hands
Can now no longer play the part of the magnet
And cause the life-stream
To rush through its avenues
And return hurriedly to its fountain,
An helper of failing nature.
The mellow floods of light
That emanate from thy face,
(Whose beauty Trammus might envy)
Will now neither gender hope
Nor cause the duties and desires of life
To appear in radiant phantasm,
And allure me on to grapple with them.
The music of thy gay laugh
Or the sweet notes of thy voice in song
Will no longer cheer as a bird, singing
At the close of a sultry summer's day.

“ Time was when all these would disperse sadness,
As a lighted taper dismisses the darkness

Of a garret and causes it to flee away,
Upon the foremost signal of its approach.

But the Hand that formed thee
And caused thy desires and thy delights
To play so delightfully, without attrition
To thyself or thy fellows,
Is beck'ning me to His presence;
And though all the world be aglow
With swelling harmony and pleasure,
I shall be swift to obey such mandate high and just."

PART II.

*"If solitude succeed to grief,
Surcease from pain brings slight relief."*

I.

What plans are human? What divine?
Who dares usurp to draw the line?
Is not this life we live a paradox?
Then 'tis not strange that vice at virtue mocks.
To creatures here fall good and ill
Sure, all allow,—but whence the will?
If what we call dark Evil's fount
Was drained of all its tainting flow,
Could mortal man in safety mount
To highest hopes and fear no foe?
Remains there not a Hand that's free
To build, create, or to destroy?
Then cherish not the thought, the fee
That naught but evil will annoy.
Uncourted hope that love doth bring
From out the heart, her parent spring,
That bids man hazard all,—e'en life,

And woman brook the deepest strife,
May blighted be, and then I ween
'Twill fade as it did supervene.
When hope hath fled the human heart,
(It boots not what or whence the dart.)
That painful void the mind doth seek to fill,
Albeit at first 'tis stifled—dormant—still.
But ofttimes when it fails supply
From nature's bourn so vast and high,
The poniard, glaive or stiff'ning lead
Makes quick recourse from sorrow's dread;
Or baneful draught may intervene
'Twixt heart and mind—and close life's scene.
But all who've been by such bereft
Seek not the respite found in death;
For some live on against their will
And ne'er this void will seek to fill;
But inly court some fond distress
That brings not rest or blessedness.
New scenes, new forms, may greet the eye
And turn dark sorrow's thoughts awry;
And this our hero thought to try.

II.

The quiet foy was soon prepared,
And kindred guests were all declared;
And modest servants served with ease,
As they essayed each one to please;
But where is she, the hostess dame,
Who 'foretime supervised the same
As that they sat, and did proclaim
That wine should ne'er her board profane?
She guards no more at feast or hearth,
For she has proved the last of earth.

III.

Who lifts his goblet to his lips,
And quick removes it ere he sips?
Who lifts again the sparkling wine
When something bids the draught decline?
Each guest remarked this strange demean,
And each some cause did shortly ween.
Soon Homer notes their anxious eyes,
And although loth he soon replies:
“Ye'll not think strange that I so pause,

When by my words ye know the cause;
When e'er I think such draught to drink,
A cherished mem'ry seems to link
With such intent to draw aside
My hand that lifts the hurtful tide;
I seem to hear my mother's voice
That oft has warned me 'gainst such choice;
I seem to see her pleading face
On which hot tears left furrowed trace;
From such in bliss 'twould be most free,
But that she brooks concern for me."
The fairies' hours are not more brief
Than space that brought the lull relief;
For some deride the apparition
That warned aside the deglutition.

IV.

He there did bid his friends adieu,
Before he sailed the waters blue.
'Mong those who clasped his parting hand,
Regretting that he leaves their land,
Regretting they could not command

His voyage long be smooth and fair,
His sojourn free from anxious care,
Two children * came—a bird-like pair.
The artist eye is quick to see
A beauteous ray where e're it be.
And when he scanned these children o'er,
The fittest terms he did implore,
That he their graces might express
In worthy words of tenderness.
“ Oh, sprightly girl! Oh, lovely boy!
A mother's life, a father's joy.
Why came ye to this part of earth?
Applied ye for such meanly birth?
Or, uncounseled were you driven,
By Highest power from yon fair Heaven,
(That Power which o'er all worlds holds sway;
That power which gives and takes away;)
And 'lowed to choose and seek such clime,
As best might suit your thoughtless minds?
But should you e'er your choice ignore,
Or ever o'er your lot deplore,

*His tenant's children.

Think not such strange; or should ye soar
From low estate to Fame's own gilded door,---
And there admission be denied,
Know this: thine own—thy father's name
Withholds from you the goal of fame;
Secures you from the curse of fame,
Though ardently ye may've applied.

“Such forms, such faces as you wear,
Such eyes of light, such sunny hair,
Such thought mature in-childish mind,
That were ye of the manor-born
With beauties less of mind and form,
But bearing name of noble line,—
Your graces would some artist praise
In marble, song or rhythmic lays.”

V.

The mooring's free, the wind is fair,
And proudly doth the huge ship bear
Our Homer from his native shore;
The sun slow seeks his western berth
That veils in darkness half of earth;

And when this orb he sees no more,
And hill and shore recede beyond his sight
Unto his native land he said, "Good-night."

VI.

That night a nascent calmness did prevail,
And smother grew the steady sail;
No sea-wind blew unwelcome blast,
No sea-bird screamed above the mast;
A desert stillness wrapped the deep,
Inviting mariner to sleep.
More turns the mind to Highest Power
In deepest calm, than stormiest hour?
The raving winds, the rolling sea
Bespeak His might though terribly;
Man pleads Him then, that He assuage
The elements in their mad rage,
That from death's furies ambient,
He be secure though 'gainst him sent.
When perils menace man implores;
When quiet reigns he then adores.

VII.

When Homer walked the deck alone,
His heart so heavy,—was it stone?
Such time as this when thoughts are pent,
The mind's into the future sent,
Then backward o'er the past is bent.
Can that be stone which seems to feel
Another's woe, another's weal?
Must hearts that brave some dreadful shock
Become insensible like rock?
His heart to harshness was unused
And this the strain in which he mused:

“ I sail this night from home and friends,
To seek a foreign land;
And can I hope to gain amends
Beyond some tropic strand?

“ My early friends will never know
The sadness of my heart;
Though gloomy I did ne'er seem so;—
Of gayety I seemed a part.

“ They’ll never know the bent of mind
To curse my natal day;
For in my past they can not find
Least cause for such dismay.

“ Who weeps at sore calamity,
By such will ease obtain;
But he who brooks with tearless ee
Must have a seething brain.

“ My life was robbed of all its day
By that dread enemy,
That came and bore my love away,—
That bright mortality.

“ And though she’s gone, nor trace is seen,
That of my life she was a part,
But graver proof no one can ween,
Than lasting impress on my heart.

“ Should they dissect this useless clay,
When life has tak’n its flight,
To dwell where rolls eternal day
In sweet and pure delight, ”

“Perchance they’ll find the vital part
That bade the spirit fly;
That, too, withheld its keenest dart,
Til worn and doomed to die.

“But on the heart affection’s seat,
When seen by flickering ray,
These words the skillful eye will meet:
‘My lost love’s flown away.’”

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VIII.

The good ship plowed the briny main;
The destined port they hoped to gain;
The novel plans and scenes at sea
Perchance restored tranquillity;
For o’er the deep and toward the sky,
Our Homer gazed with pleased eye;
He watched the sea-birds in their flight,
From spectre-glimpse till full in sight;
Some on the masts would chance to light
To rest awhile their wearied wing,

Then downward they themselves would fling,
As if to merge in quiet wave,
And beak and plumage freely lave.
But ere they reach the briny bath,
They wheel aloft their airy path.
Their graceful evolutions he would note,
As fairy-like the vapor sea they'd float,
Until they'd pass beyond his view,
Or tiring eye claimed something new.
But when he moved the deck apace or slow
Admiring eyes—he never seem to know—
Would note *his* movements then compare
With winged wand'ers of the air.

IX.

Each knot he neared "earth's central line"
Where changeless night brings equal day;
Nor fiercer rays the sun doth shine
Than in this zone that is midway
Betwixt the realms of constant snow,
Whose centric poles—will man e'er know?

X.

The many islands of the deep
Yield rest to bird and sailor, too;
And wearied eye, alike will greet
With wearied wing, some land's first view.
Our hero's bark steered not anear
Joanna's isle; in sooth the fear
Of dang'rous bore that rushes high,
The estuary where she lie,
Would warn most reckless mariner
To turn aside nor sail near her—
This holm at Great River's mouth,
Whose site may claim the North and South.
But moored she first in Rio's fort,
Where Sousa, centuries before,
Who crossed Atlantic 'scaped its tort
And touched on year's first day this shore,
This bay he thought an estuary,
And named it "River of January."

XI.

Who would depaint great Fraul's* domain,
Will find he tasks an endless strain;
For her expanse is dark and wide,
And ocean laves on either side;
Her forests, rivers, mountains high,
Her precious metals' deep supply,
Her plains where countless cattle feed,
Where roams the yet unbridled steed
In all his native wildness wholly free,
The antitype of equine liberty,
And other features equal great,
None full describes, though he relate
In language that is brief and terse,
Or medium 'dopts of prose or verse.
Sure one that notes this empire vast,
Her habitants of graded caste
Will not regard as least or last;
But should his verse from such be free,
He full esteems not liberty.

*Brazil.

But oh! forget not one of royal birth
Whose heart throbbed for the oppressed serf,
Whose mind was higher than the throne
The which she now may never own,
As her descendent right to be
By which to guard sweet liberty.
Such enviable act of highest worth
Cannot be recompensed with thrones of earth;
When Heav'n requites such deeds of love,
(And such can only be above)
Methinks *her* crown will be such weight,
That heavily 'twill press her brow,
(If aught in bliss can ever grate)
And cause the crowned to cry "Enow."

XII.

From coffee grove and diamond mine,
A hum of voices greets the ear;
'Tis compensated labor's sweetest chime,
As now no master's lash they fear;
For creamy griffe and dark-hued slave
Are both from servile bondage free.

Not heartless tasks bestirred them brave
'Til they usurped their liberty,
But Isabella the royal heir
Unto this empire's throne so fair,
Whose heart was touched, who could not brook
The tedious plan that rulers took
To free the lowly from such curse,
As ne'er should blast this universe,
Assumed the throne and dismissed heartless lords,
And summoned those who'd listen to her words—
Her pleading words in sore behalf of those
Who by their birth were doomed to darkest woes.
Her heart's desire she then did full obtain,
When lauding lords did sign her just decree
By which she might proclaim, "They're free! They're free!"
Then ended briefest but most glorious reign.

XIII.

The burdened spirit's swift to own
A trivial kindness toward it shown.
If Freedom Heav'n's blessing light
And turn to day some long dark night,

How can the liberated pay
Dispenser of such glorious ray,
The homage that their hearts do feel,
Because of unexpected weal?

XIV.

Why halts the Empress' coach of state?
Is it her bidding that it wait?
Nay; oft the when she drives the street
The grateful vassals crowd to greet,
And restless steeds perforce do stand,
The while they grasp their freer's hand;
If this they fail they gain her eye,
Or touch her robe as they pass by.
And can she ne'er their sov'reign be,
The one who made their lives so free?
'Twas not by power of gun and sword,
As in our land where battling horde
Out-slaughtered far the weaker side of state,
Which gave the pretext to emancipate.
Oh, Columbia! had ye such daughter
Thou couldst have shunned such fearful slaughter.

XV.

When Homer's sojourn here was o'er,
He thought to seek some other shore;
Then sailed he out from Rio's bay
And toward the south she made her way
The good ship, bending in her course
To meet the waves of whate'er force,
That she might ride the briny blue
And gain betime the port in view.
She anchor cast in haven fair
That placid harbor of "good air."
Laplata's estuary's wide,
Nor shore is seen from side to side;
Her queen sits on her southern shore,
Which oft has been the scene of gore;
For man and beast in pristine state
Relented not for Christians' fate;
But since those days of forest foes,
Ambition turmoiled deadly throes;
The stronger then—perchance the right
Would rise and rule by force of might.

Adorers then of conquerors' dust,
(Be deeds heroic or unjust)
Eternize with some granite pile
The name and fame—perhaps awhile.

XVI.

Our artist hero's mind found food
In trophies raised o'er deeds of blood;
The sculptor's plan he would avow
Or criticise as he knew how;
Not strange the symmetry he would behold.
When he himself was of such matchless mold.
Not works of art and man's device
Did all his sojourn hours entice;
For nature clothed this southern zone
With beauties that compeer our own;
And these would his approach entreat,
If lifeless things e'er yearn to meet
True merit praise or flatt'ry sweet.
The landscape scene his pen would trace,
Of pampas wide that did embrace

The noble rivers bearing in their way
Their waters out to ocean's main or bay.

XVII.

The brightest skies and fairest flowers
Will gild awhile the dreary hours;
Full many days fair Homer's mind
Was fostered by new sights benign;
But novel scenes will grow too old
When oft the eyes such sights behold;
Then falls the heart from eagerness
Perhaps to lodge in sore distress;
Thus at the close of irksome day
When day's king lent his clearest ray,
Our hero's plight we'll think to say:

XVIII.

The glorious sun has passed from sight,
The day is faded into night,
The mellow twilight, too, is past;
But Luna mounts not in the sky

To aid the timid stars that try
To 'spell the darkness that's o'er cast.

XIX.

And Homer's heart sank with the day,
For mirth from it had fled away
And left him to the thought of those
Who, gone from Earth might linger near,
To give some tones of gracious cheer,
Defiling not their own repose.

XX.

He grasps his harp—this Homer L.
And thinks to raise such heavy spell
With melody from out its strings;
Anon he joins his own sad voice
Which bids the lifeless harp rejoice,
Vibrating sweetest when he sings.

* * * *

XXI.

The harp and harper's strains have ceased;
The darkness of the night's increased

For timid stars have sunk to rest;
Now walks he forth into the night,
His spirit grown somewhat more light
By tuneful sounds; he's less oppressed
But 'seeks some power that may restore
The mirth of mind enjoyed before,
When gaysome hours his spirits drest.

XXII.

And while he strolls the lighted street
And looks on wall and tower,
The night-wind brings the music sweet
From out some bagnio's bower;
Entreated by guitar's soft tone,
He enters in—but seems alone;
And as he moves among the crew,
And many eyes are turned to view,
His graceful mien is full the same
As, when adown the sacred aisle,
His ashen face all sad—half smile,
He passes, led by priestly train.

XXIII.

The clearest stream may find its way
Into some dark and murky bay,
And yet remain apart; although
Begirt with foul and turbid flow.
So he with loftiness demure
Did move, "The *pure* 'mongst the *impure*."

XXIV.

An inmate of this place of shame
This stranger sees, knows not his name,
Nor guesses she from whence he came;
But turning to a comrade near,
She speaks with voice subdued though clear:
"Who seeks our haunts this moonless night?
His form's genteel, his step is light,
And moves he with such grace and ease,
As if some critic's eye to please;
The lineaments of his face
Reflect some old and honored race;
Such hands cannot be vulgar clay,
Nor used to toil in other way

Than deftly yielding to an artist mind
To paint the hues or clearly trace the line,
Or, nimbly dancing o'er the keys
Draw forth from pipes rich melodies,
In *largo* movement smooth, and soft and grand,
While to the tones the heart doth give command,
Expressing more than gravest words can tell
Of passions high which in his soul doth dwell.
The rounded brow whose crest doth greet
The blonde waves that fall to meet,
Doth with a polished lustre glow
That gilds the features all below.

XXV.

“ Why comes he here to our foul nest ?
Think ye he's wearied and depressed,
And seeks to cool his heated brain
With wine and women—both profane ?
Methought to-night to sing such song
As oft hath 'mused the low so long;
But now my heart rejects such lays,
For o'er my mind his presence sways

Such strangely thoughts; some thoughts of good
That plead for purer womanhood.

XXVI.

Now on me rests his eye of blue,
And can it yield a glance untrue ?
It glows, not with a pirate's glare,
That charms then lures to mad despair;
But, as some light upon the shore
That warns the mariner adrift,
To steer away from rock and reef
And shun such perils evermore,—
So may these orbs of kindest glow,
To down and sinful beings show
The dangers dire that near them roll,—
Ah! what is mirrored on my soul?

XXVII.

Once more I'll gaze. So soon he's gone;
And in this place I seem alone;
Foul epithets struck on his ear
The which he could not brook to hear;

His stay was short—not strange—but best;
Can bird with gayest plumage drest
Be long content in vulture's nest?
And I, a weary Magdalene,
Will fly this night, Laplata's queen,
And seek remotest parts of Argentine.

* * * * *

XXVIII.

And days and months have sped away,
'Til near a year it's course hath run
Since that dread night when not a ray
From Heaven's dome to Earth did come
To light a path on land or main
That aids the traveler to gain,
While passing o'er some unknown road,
In safety, some unknown abode;
But He who knows His creatures' needs,
Will hear when lowest of them pleads
And fail not one in life's dark night
Who flees the wrong to seek the right.

XXIX.

The Andes range with snow-capped crest,
The pride, the grandeur of the West,—
That range which births the mightiest river
That proudly flows and flows forever,
That bosoms, too, the richest mines
Of precious metals unrefined,—
That range whose summit waters laked,
Whose summit, base and centre quaked,
When burning Earth her inward fires upsent,
And smoke obscured sun's brightest ray,
'Til scarce divide the night and day,—
Remains the axis of the continent.
Here prowls the stealthy jaguar,
And homes the ever-fierce cougar.
Dark deep defiles! Most lofty peaks!
None higher e'er the condor seeks.
The New World's vast domain is wide,
Which ocean girts on either side;
Which too may boast what Nature's done
To make this land, beneath the sun,

The grandest; but highest mountain,
And greatest stream flowing fountain
Are within thine own realm, Andes.

XXX.

Thine eastern slope in Argen's bound,
Full many a peasant's cot is found;
Their homely joys and common woes
Befit their hearts to share repose
With one in need of mercy's aid,
If be he saint or renegade;
'Tis one of such that shelters now
The escapade who did avow
The city's wicked throng to flee,
For place of nascent purity.
And as she lies affliction's bed,
Death's tokens round her thickly spread,
She's seen to move her lips in prayer,
As pleading Him death's pangs to share,
Though cross nor priest beside her there;
She knows that soon she'll cease to live
And of her past she thinks to give

Of warning glow that spoke "Beware!"
Of blessed spell that wrought despair.

XXXI.

"In devious ways God warning sends
To mortals here to make amends,
Yes, unto all a message comes
With priestly shrive, on friars' tongues,
In health's, in wealth's, in fame's decline;
These all the soul are to refine
And lead its thoughts away from earth,
To seek that Power that gave it birth,
And homage pay to Him and worth,
And beg the just and stern decree repealed,
That it no longer be thus unanneled.
But unto me, this message blest
That more than filled my darkened breast,
Came not by priestly aid or sacred tome,
Though these my life did chide whilome;
'Twas in a hall, yes in a place
Where virtue unveils not her face,

Except in mortals near to angels pure;
Alas! are they not also insecure?

A stranger came whose form and mein
Eclipsed all I e'er had seen
Move in that gorgeous hall before;
And while I gazed my mind distressed
"To see such bird in such a nest,"
His mission knew I not nor more.
But when his face full on me turned,
My heart within me deeply burned,
As off his soul so near divine,
It was reflected on to mine;
I saw it gleam those windows through
Whose panes were of most beauteous hue;
The curtains were full drawn aside
And 'twixt them glowed it deep and wide,
And to my soul sent such unrest;
Gave birth to longings to resign
My carnal will to His divine,
And seek some spot that's free and blest.
I saw but once nor saw again

Except by memory's eye, though when
Dread evil threatened to reclaim
And rule again his old domain
And turn desires for right awry,
I saw with more than memory;
Yea, more than with the globe of sight,
Which of the body is the light,
For my whole being then was eyes
To see that one which seemed to rise
And plant himself 'twixt him and me,
That such bright form I should not see,
And Satan's plot thus thwarted be.
Though speech's organs all were dumb,
From closed lips there seemed to come
Sweet words of solace kindly given
To cheer my heart that hard had striven
To reconcile demands of Heav'n.

XXXII.

“ This fevered clay hath ceased to burn
And to the earth will soon return;
These pliant limbs refuse to move,

All death's approach most plainly prove;
My senses fail, my voice grows weak,
I hear but faint though loud you speak;
No dimness yet beclouds mine eye,
Though shrouded is the memory;
The present now o'ershades the past,
As longest day that melts at last,
By twilight's sombre glow's o'ercast;
The eye yields not its innate fire,
Nor yield it full 'til I expire;
Blest organ to the body given,
Looks last on earth and first in Heav'n.
Brief space through which we pass to bliss,—
Brief blank betwixt that world and this.
The last that fails in Time will be
The first to greet Eternity."

XXXIII.

Upon her wrist her hand was placed,
As if to note the life-throb's waste.
All silent now within that room,
Intensified by death's deep gloom;

And those who watched thought all was o'er,
Thought that she breathed and saw no more;
But list'ning near—a dull cold breath
That was the last to yield in death,
Gave accents in these falt'ring words:
“'Tis done; *pulso* has ceased.”

* * * *

Unheard
Is woman's wail or man's deep moan
For that freed spirit that has flown;
For stranger came she to their cot,
As stranger must she be forgot;
And they who served her latest need
Will never know her name or creed,—
Will never know that their reward shall be
The same as Christ did grant to all, when He
Those gracious words did say, “As ye
Have done it to the least of these,
So ye have done it unto Me.”

PART III.

*"His heart was formed for softness warped to wrong,
Betrayed too early and beguiled too long."*

I.

The tender plant springs from its earthy mold,
And soon its blowing beauty we behold;
We breathe its breath and dote upon its hues,
And quickly chide him who would such refuse;
We know that such has transient stay,
But what shall cause it pass away ?
A killing frost or feeding hart
May nip it ere its sweets depart;
Or luckless tread of man or beast
May bruise—and then its life is ceased.
But what the mean no one can tell,
Will crush the flower we love so well.
A mortal life is launched on Time,
And, like the flower's, no choice of clime;
Nor choice of lot or rank or place
Is offered one who 'gins life's race.
None can envisage innocence

And fate divine by gaze intense.
The spring, life's youth though safely past
No warder leaves 'gainst wintry blast,

II.

When Homer seeks again his home,
Expectant of the joys that come
From safe return to friends' embrace,
When sojourns one in distant place,
Expanse of acres seem the same,
And knows he not but ancient name
That long hath held such lands in fee,
Controlled it many a century,
Doth still retain its honored place;
Secure he feels that by the change
That time will bring (if naught derange)
He'll be the *landgrave* of his race.

III.

Long hopes of youth and brighter years
That blew and flowered amid no fears,
Were banished from his welling heart

The when he learned that all nor part
Of such domain and manor old
Would now be his to claim or hold;
Why no descendent right has he,
This long expectant legatee?
The *Simoon* blew pernicious blast
That dwined estate so richly vast;
Not parent guardian did restrain
This wasting wave of wealth's domain.
Can man his offspring sore debase
And fittest type be of our race?

IV.

When Homer o'er such fate did brood,
His mind was of most abject mood;
His very spirit gnawed his frame;
His every look would tell the same.
And while in such state of distress,
Who comes his heavy load to less
And pleads him step aside the path
In which blow waves of baneful wrath?
Her eye is of the clearest blue,

Complexion of the softest hue;
The waves of light that sweep her face,
The motions of her form of grace
Declare them both of the same race;
Not need to say, "They're of one line,"
For lineal semblance clear doth shine
In shades too plain to be mistaken,
Though naught else such would e'er awaken.
With earnest words in pleading tone,
She made his cause to seem her own;
Admonishing with earnest pleas
The which was couched in terms like these:

V.

"The maid who came to Alp* that night,
And while the cloud was yet in sight,
Begged him to yield that very hour
Unto the right or else her power
To check or turn his dang'rous course
Would be forever gone or lost;
But for the wrong he did decide,

*Hero of Byron's "Siege of Corinth."

Though 'gainst her will—his promised bride.
Nor maid nor I need come to thee,
To warn you from the worst to flee,
For, the good angel in thy breast
(And one is there I know full well,
For acts and looks its presence tell,)
If giv'n dominion o'er the rest
Of all thy passions good or ill,
To higher life will lead the still;
This angel, Conscience can control
The passions of the human soul,
Just as thy will directs she may;
Beyond this power she hath no sway.
Oh! let thy will direct her right;
And be she always kept in sight,—
Not lost to view like Corinth's maid,
Because forsooth was not obeyed,
When counseled she the renegade.

VI.

“ Will lips that now with truth o'erflow,
If moisten'd with some hemlock slow,

Be like the Redman's arrow grass,
Strike death to that which thinks to pass
Along his path in forest made,
Beset each side with poisoned blade?
Can clearest stream from purest head
Flow constant o'er a miry bed
And not unclean o'er turbid grow?
Nor mix it with that element
Which loosened by it's force is sent
Adown its course in hurried flow?

VII.

“ Must ruthless cares furrow thy face,
And silver hairs these locks displace?
Must toil and strife thy lithesome form
Bend as a reed before the storm?
Must days and years leave lasting trace
Which time nor skill can not efface?
Must all these things work their decay
To turn the mind from error's way? ”

VII.

No plighted promise, "Yes, 'twill be
The same as thou entreatest me,"
Was giv'n, her heavy heart to ease,
Or anxious mind to slight appease.
'Tis not suspense but 'tis despair
That marked her cheek so wan and fair;
She turned aside her high-born kin,
(So lofty save one growing sin)
And this she felt her soul within:
"Oh! Nature when from out thy store
Of rarest gems thou didst outpour
To endow him with so fine a sense,
Didst thou not grieve to know from whence
To clothe the next who might appear
To be supplied from out thy sphere?
Such fineness cannot come to earth
Except it cause in store a dearth.
But though my heart *intensely* yearn,
That to the right an one should turn,
I'll steel it o'er, cement my lips

For fear some word of warning slips—
Some useless word of warning slips
From out my throat, imprisoned there,
And's lost in nothingness on air.
Though grave, this lesson I did learn,
That if the mildest will not turn,
Admonish not the coarse and stern."

CONCLUSION.

Who may indulge this rhythmic rede
Will fain to know, did e're he heed
Such warning giv'n, or stirred his breast
With innate longings for that rest
That full is found in safety's bourn, and sought
The boon that's priceless yet so eas'ly bought;
Or did he meet his dying day
With uncurbed passion in dread sway?
To such none will indite reply
Nor fate divine by prophecy.
A hapless doom he hath not met,
For—Homer L. is living yet.

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